

May 31, 2026—Trinity Sunday (the First Sunday after Pentecost)
The Rev. James Wyatt

Love, Grace, and Communion

This is a weird Sunday. The basic structure of our church year is built around the story of Jesus — his birth, his life and ministry and death, his resurrection and ascension, and the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But now we come to Trinity Sunday, which is not really about the story of Jesus's life. Instead, it celebrates a teaching of the church, the complicated and paradoxical doctrine of the Trinity. So we end up with lessons this week that aren't so much about the story of our faith as they are places where we see glimpses of the fledgling idea of the Trinity — places in the New Testament where the language of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is first used, as well as a reading from Genesis that speaks of the breath of God — which we understand to be the Holy Spirit — and hints at the plurality in God's unity as God says, "Let *us* create humankind in *our* image."

It took a long time for the Christian church to find its way from the simple formulations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Paul and Matthew to the full-fledged philosophy of the Trinity, which tries to carefully define the interrelationship of three divine Persons with a single divine Substance. And all the debates around that, debates both philosophical and pastoral, were the sort of thing I really grooved on when I was in seminary.

But this Sunday always makes me mindful of this warning from St. Isaac the Syrian, a seventh-century bishop and theologian: "Flee from discussions of dogma as from an unruly lion; and never embark upon them yourself." And that actually seems like pretty good advice to me. So rather than try to explain the Trinity to you, I want to spend a little time in the realm of story and poetry, *exploring* this *mystery* of Trinity, not trying to explain it — inspired by our reading from Genesis this morning, and read through the lens of Paul's epistle. So here's a story:

It's an unusual story, actually. We expect a story to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. But to tell this story, I have to start outside the story, with a sort of preface, if you will:

At the foundation, God is. This is a thing that is true. This is a thing that is eternal. It was true, it is true, it always will be true — independent of time, because God is outside of time, beyond the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story — God is eternal.

The complicated and paradoxical doctrine of the Trinity tells us that this one, eternal God is one being, one substance, *and* this eternal God is also three persons. We have a lot of ways to name those three persons: as early as Paul and Matthew, the church called them Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But in the same breath, Paul gives them other names: the **Grace** of Jesus Christ, the **Love** of God, and the **Communion** of the Holy Spirit. So I want to play with that a little bit: The eternal God is three persons: Love, Grace, and Communion.

Love is like a parent here, giving birth to Grace, which is Love freely given away. And Communion proceeds from Love like breath from the lungs, because Communion is Love shared and reciprocated, Love that binds together and unites. Love, Grace, and Communion dance together, intermingle with each other — until sometimes it's hard to tell where one ends and another begins. This is a true thing: at the foundation, God is — Love, and Grace, and Communion are. This is eternal.

But there is also a beginning to the story, a start to the ticking clock of time. And because God is eternal, God was at the beginning: Love and Grace and Communion were at the beginning.

Love is the maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. Love made the beginning. Love caused being to be.

Also in the beginning was Grace, Love's dear child, whom the Gospel of John calls Word — because Grace is how Love is spoken to us. John tells us that Grace was with God, and Grace was God, and all things came into being through Grace, which is Love freely given away.

Also in the beginning was Communion, blowing across the nothing, transforming chaos into creation, and breathing life into being. Communion is the spirit of Love, Love's breath that comforts us and connects us.

And in the beginning, God spoke. Every divine action, according to St. Basil in the fourth century, begins from Love, proceeds through Grace, and is completed in Communion. So Love spoke, and Grace was the Word Love spoke, and Communion brought light into being. Love spoke, and Grace was the Word, and Communion brought into being the sky, the earth and seas, plants and fruits, the sun and moon and stars and living creatures of every kind. And all these things were good, because they were made beginning from Love, proceeding through Grace, and completed in Communion—which is Love shared and reciprocated, Love that binds together and unites.

Then Love spoke, saying, "Let *us*—Love and Grace and Communion—let us make humankind in our image." And Grace was the Word Love spoke, and Communion brought us into being, made in the image of Love, according to the likeness of Grace, brought to completion in Communion—Communion with God and one another, Communion with all the rest of creation, bound together in Love. And we too were *very good*.

At the foundation, God is, eternally and always. At the beginning God was; and if time does ever come to an end, as all stories do, still God will be—Love and Grace and Communion in their eternal dance.

But what happens when the eternal Love loves the world, bound as it is in time? Because of course Love would *love* the world Love made.

So, once, at a particular moment in time, Grace decided to leave the eternal dance and step into time. Because of course Grace would have the *grace* to bring Love to us, here, where we are, tangled up in time. Grace became flesh, fully human and still fully divine, and dwelled among us, as the person we know as Jesus. Jesus was Grace incarnate, which is Love freely given. And because the eternal Grace became flesh, all flesh was filled with Grace. Because the eternal Grace lived a human life trapped in time—from birth to a painful, messy death—all of human life in time, in all its pains and joys, was filled with Grace. And because the eternal Grace lived a life in Communion, a life in the Spirit, so can we—baptized into one body in the name of Love and Grace and Communion, we can live in Communion with God, with one another, and with all of God's creation—caught up with Grace in the same eternal dance.

What would it be like, do you think, to fully open ourselves to Grace, who gently carries us to the heart of Love that is the foundation of all being? What would it be like to get swept up in the eternal, cosmic dance, to be carried away in blest Communion with God and all of creation? What would it be like to see the image of Love in all people, to let ourselves be shaped into the likeness of Grace, to see the breath of Communion in all life, and the goodness in all creation?

Maybe we would find ourselves transformed as we come here in Communion and feast at the table of Grace. Maybe we would go out from here, as Grace embodied, to bring Grace—which is Love freely given—to a suffering world. And maybe we would discover true Communion—which is Love shared and reciprocated—binding us together with the world Love made, uniting us with all creation.

May it be so. And may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of us to the end of the age. Amen.